

## Selections: January 2022



### Cliequot Book Club

#### January 2022 Selections

BOOK TITLE	Author	Reviewed by	Genre
All Her Little Secrets	Wanda M. Morris	Sandra	Mystery
As the Wicked Watch	Tamron Hall	Sandra	Mystery
Body and Soul Food	Abby Collette	Sandra	Mystery
Dinner on Primrose Hill	Jodi Thomas	Sandra	Fiction
If You Must Know	Jamie Beck	Sandra	Fiction
Mistral's Daughter	Judith Krantz	Sandra	Fiction
Skin of the Sea	Natasha Bowen	Sandra	Fantasy
Still Life <sup>GMA</sup>	Sarah Winman	Sandra	Historical Fiction
The Trouble with Hating You	Sajni Patel	Sandra	Romance
Will	Will Smith	Sandra	Nonfiction
Wish You Were Here	Jodi Picolt	Sandra	Fiction
Fallen	Linda Castillo	Sandra	Mystery

NOTES:

GMA: Good Morning America Book Club or Book Buzz Pick

#### **Body and Soul Food** by Abby Collette

Fun first in series cozy mystery. A set of twins separated at birth, come back together to open a bookstore and restaurant. And, of course, there is a dead body. Looking forward to the rest of the series!

#### **Dinner on Primrose Hill** by Jodi Thomas

Love this series. I really like the sweet romance and tenderness of the characters. This one was my favorite.

#### **If You Must Know** by Jamie Beck

Compelling family fiction. Two sisters that are constantly at odds over their differences come together in a time of crisis.

#### **Mistral's Daughter** by Judith Krantz

So fun to reread this for Jamie Brenner's book club! I read this as a teen, loved it then and really love it now.

#### **Skin of the Sea** by Natasha Bowen

Here is a story. Story it is. Love the distinctive voice and telling of the Mami Wata (Black mermaid). The angst and sorrow of the enslaved souls lost at sea is well told in the story of creation and the Gods. Beautiful story; looking forward to book 2!

**The Trouble With Hating You** by Sajni Patel

Charming enemies to lovers romance, Indian matchmaking style!

**Wish you Were Here** by Jodi Picolt

An American woman is stranded on the Galapagos Islands at the beginning of Covid-19. She deals with the uncertainty and isolation by befriending a teenager and her family. It is a quiet novel about the pandemic and its impact on all of us.

**Fallen** by Linda Castillo

Twisty Amish murder. I really thought I had this figured out--not. Loved it!

**Selections: February 2022**



**Clicquot Book Club**

**February 2022 Selections**

BOOK TITLE	Author	Reviewed by	Genre
A Duke, The Lady, and A Baby	Vanessa Riley	Sandra	Historical Romance
Dava Shastri's Last Day <sup>GMA</sup>	Kirthana Ramisetti	Sandra	Fiction
Heart & Seoul	Jen Frederick	Sandra	Fiction
Honor <sup>RBC</sup>	Thrity Umrigar	Sandra	Fiction
Last Girl Ghosted	Lisa Unger	Sandra	Mystery
Must Love Books	Shauna Robinson	Sandra	Fiction
The Fastest Way to Fall	Denise Williams	Sandra	Romance
The Last Dance of the Debutante	Julia Kelly	Sandra	Historical Fiction
The School for Good Mothers <sup>RWJ</sup>	Jessamine Chan	Sandra	Fiction
The Reading List	Sara Nisha Adams	Sandra	Fiction

NOTES:

GMA: Good Morning America Book Club or Book Buzz Pick

RWJ: Read With Jenna

RBC: Reese's Book Club

**Dava Shastri's Last Day** by Kirthana Ramisetti

What if you knew you were dying, so you had your death announced so you could hear what was being said about you? That's the premise of this thoughtful novel. Dava faces her mortality with one less weekend with her children. Secrets are revealed and uncomfortable truths are

spoken. This story about a mother's unyielding love for family and her legacy makes this book unforgettable.

**Heart and Seoul** by Jen Frederick

A Korean woman who is adopted returns to Korea to find her biological parents. She discovers her own self worth and finds romance along the way while searching for her biological roots. My only criticism is that the beginning is a little slow. And the publishing company's marketing team was wrong to even try to classify this as a romance novel. It feels more like a K-drama. It is a good book, but straight up women's fiction.

**Honor** by Thrity Umrigar

Honor, by definition: "Honesty, fairness, or integrity in one's beliefs and actions". This word is twisted to convey the ugliness of humanity disguised as upholding piety and tradition. This book is a thoughtful look at what happens when a young Indian woman, Meena, is set on fire because of the ugly tradition of honor. Seen through the eyes of the Indian-American journalist who is covering the story and the phoenix rising in the birth of her child, Abru, who's name means "honor". Brilliant and thought provoking: I loved it.

**Last Girl Ghosted** by Lisa Unger

Dark and twisty, this book had me on the edge of my seat!

**The Fastest Way to Fall** by Denise Williams

Fitness coach and a woman blogging her fitness journey make for an absolutely charming romance.

**The Last Dance of the Debutante** by Julia Kelly

Charming look on the last debutante season. A little campy with the over-the-top drama, but that's why I loved it. It had a true old-timey soap opera "Peyton Place" vibe.

**The School for Good Mothers** by Jessamine Chan

Chilling story of a mother who one fateful morning neglects her daughter and is mandated to a school to learn how to be a good mother. So much to unpack in this novel with a commentary on how mothers of color are judged more harshly in the court system than white women.

**The Reading List** by Sara Nisha Adams

This book was Everything! A slip of paper with a list of eight books, found in the back of a book with a note that says "in case you need it". This is a book of loss, love, hope, and connection. It is definitely a book for book lovers and lovers of libraries!

## Selections: March 2022



### Clacquot Book Club

#### March 2022 Selections

BOOK TITLE	Author	Reviewed by	Genre
<b>Black Girls Must Be Magic</b> <sup>GMA</sup>	Jayne Allen	Sandra	Fiction
<b>Finlay Donovan Knocks 'Em Dead</b>	Elle Cosimano	Sandra	Mystery
<b>Heiress Apparently</b>	Diana Ma	Sandra	Fiction
<b>Lace</b>	Shirley Conran	Sandra	Fiction
<b>Olga Dies Dreaming</b>	Xochitl Gonzalez	Sandra	Fiction
<b>Reminders of Him</b>	Colleen Hoover	Sandra	Fiction
<b>The Family You Make</b>	Jill Shalvis	Sandra	Romance
<b>The Magnolia Palace</b>	Fiona Davis	Sandra	Historical Fiction
<b>The Maid</b> <sup>GMA</sup>	Nita Prose	Sandra	Mystery
<b>The Paris Bookseller</b>	Kerri Maher	Sandra	Historical Fiction
<b>Violeta</b>	Isabel Allende	Sandra	Historical Fiction
<b>The Violin Conspiracy</b> <sup>GMA</sup>	Brendan Slocumb	Sandra	Mystery

#### NOTES:

**GMA:** Good Morning America Book Club or Book Buzz Pick

#### **Black Girls Must Be Magic** by Jayne Allen

Sequel to "Black Girls Must Be Exhausted" continues Tabby's search for self. As Tabby continues to struggle with the loss of her grandmother, she is faced with pregnancy, man issues, and her career as a Black newscaster. This one felt a little like a telenovela, but it's still a great read.

#### **Finlay Donovan Knocks 'Em Dead** by Elle Cosimano

Finley Donovan is back! As always, her life is a hot mess. She needs to be writing her next mystery book, but instead, she's once again involved in a real life mystery. Someone wants her ex-husband dead. Finley, and her sidekick Vero are the amateur sleuth version of Lucy and Ethel. Fun read!

#### **Heiress Apparently** by Diana Ma

A young Chinese-American actress travels to Beijing and finds family she never knew existed. As she learns more about her family's past, she discovers her own self worth.

#### **Lace** by Shirley Conran

A Jamie Brenner Throwback Thursday Book Club pick: not sure this could have been written today as it contains every trope under the sun. 740 pages too long, but still a fun read--if not by modern standards.

**Olga Dies Dreaming** by Xochitl Gonzalez

The chase for the American Dream as seen through Puerto Rican wedding planner Olga and her congressman brother Pietro. The story is filled with long-held family secrets that chase the identity seeking siblings. A quiet novel with a lot to unpack on racism, sexism, and homophobia.

**Reminders of Him** by Colleen Hoover

Haunting story of a young woman looking for redemption from sins of her past. Hoover's writing makes you ache for her and root for her all at the same time.

**The Family You Make** by Jill Shavis

A woman longing for family facing possible death agrees to fake a relationship. This sweet romance brings out all the feels.

**The Magnolia Palace** by Fiona Davis

Fiona Davis is one of my favorite historical fiction authors. She crafts seamless stories of dueling timelines. She does not disappoint in this book, going between 1919 and 1966. This is a story of stolen identities, stolen jewelry, stolen affections, stolen allegiances, and ultimately, the restored history of what happened at Frick mansion. I loved it.

**The Maid** by Nita Prose

Charming mystery. Molly is a maid at an exclusive hotel who unwittingly becomes a suspect when she discovers a body in a hotel room. While Molly is never identified as neurodivergent, that is the assumption given to the readers as to her being unaware of the mess she's in. I loved it, but hated the final twist at the end--it didn't track with the rest of the novel.

**The Paris Bookseller** by Kerri Maher

Historical fiction about Paris Bookseller Sylvia Beach and her publication of James Joyce's book *Ulysses*. The book is well researched and documented. That is why I did not love this book, but liked it. I love Maher's writing and wish it were more infused in this story. I will say I learned a lot about the early days of publishing.

**Violeta** by Isabel Allende

This story is told through the eyes of Violeta, a hundred year old woman who was born in 1920 during the Spanish Flu and the end of her life in 2020 during the Corona pandemic. This tale is told in a way that many of our elders speak. The book often criss-crossed through time and meanders to make a point. At times, I was like "Get to the point already". Then I realized that

was the beauty of this novel. The reader feels like they are learning from the old, and the only way to do that is to listen and--in this case--read.

**The Violin Conspiracy** by Brendan Slocumb

Wow! A fast-paced mystery of an inherited violin that turns out to be a Stradivarius is stolen right before the Tchaikovsky competition. Ray, a black violinist, never felt that he belonged, except when he was playing--and now the violin is gone. There is so much story here, and so much to unpack and discuss. My favorite passage from the book "...Music is truly a universal language, and that we, the listeners, will always impose our own fears and biases, our own hopes and hungers, in whatever we hear." This book is extraordinary.

## Selections: April 2022



### Cliequot Book Club

#### April 2022 Selections

BOOK TITLE	Author	Reviewed by	Genre
<b>A Deadly Inside Scoop</b>	Abby Collette	Sandra	Mystery
<b>An Inconvenient Woman</b>	Dominick Dunne	Sandra	Fiction
<b>Joan is Okay</b>	Weike Wang	Sandra	Fiction
<b>My Darling Husband</b>	Kimberly Belle	Sandra	Mystery
<b>One Italian Summer</b>	Rebecca Serle	Sandra	Fiction
<b>The Brilliant Life of Eudora Honeysett</b>	Annie Lyons	Sandra	Fiction
<b>The Christie Affair</b> <sup>RBC</sup>	Nina de Gramont	Sandra	Historical Fiction
<b>The Department of Rare Books and Special Collections</b>	Eva Jureczyk	Sandra	Fiction
<b>The Liz Taylor Ring</b>	Brenda Janowitz	Sandra	Historical Fiction
<b>The Love of My Life</b> <sup>GMA</sup>	Rosie Walsh	Sandra	Mystery
<b>The Roughest Draft</b>	<small>Emily Wilderford &amp; Austin Siegemund-Berlin</small>	Sandra	Romance
<b>The Taste of Ginger</b>	Mansi Shah	Sandra	Fiction
<b>You've Reached Sam</b>	Dustin Thao	Sandra	Fiction
<b>Black Cake</b> <sup>RWJ</sup>	Charmaine Wilkerson	Sandra	Fiction

**NOTES:**

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#### **A Deadly Inside Scoop** by Abby Collette

Cute cozy mystery, the first in a series in a family ice cream shop. This book set up the series with a cast of zany characters and red herrings to solve the mystery. The ice cream flavors sounded amazing. Looking forward to reading the next installment.

#### **An Inconvenient Woman** by Dominick Dunne

A Jamie Brenner Throwback Thursday Book Club pick. Wow; a voyeuristic look into the life of the rich and spoiled. This is a juicy book of a husband, his mistress, his wife, and the reporter who witnesses their exploits. Such a fun read!

#### **Joan is Okay** by Weike Wang

This is a quiet novel that explores an Asian doctor's life before the pandemic and right before the onset of 2020. With themes of isolation, assimilation, stoicism, and racism this book will resonate with readers on a very deep level. My only criticism is that there are no chapter breaks which, just like the pandemic, made this exhausting at times.

#### **My Darling Husband** by Kimberly Belle

This had me on edge. A twisty page turner on a home invasion. The story is told in timed increments through the eyes of the hostage-- wife Jade, the kidnapper-- Sebastian, the husband desperately trying to find money for the ransom, and the reporter-- Juanita, trying to make sense of the aftermath.

**One Italian Summer** by Rebecca Serle

Haunting novel about grief. When Katie's mother dies, she takes the trip to the Amalfi Coast on what was to have been a trip they took together. Overwhelmed with the loss of her mother, who was her best friend, she retraces her mother's steps of her time in Italy years ago. A poignant story with happy tears.

**The Brilliant Life of Eudora Honeysett** by Annie Lyons

A beautiful story of 85 year old Eudora who is alone in this world. She makes the decision to book a date with an assisted end-of-life clinic so she can leave this world on her own terms. Then she meets her adorable new neighbor, ten year-old Rose, and becomes involved in her life. Just when Eudora is ready to die is the moment she starts to live.

**The Christie Affair** by Nina de Gramont

Historical fiction account of the infamous Agatha Christie disappearance. This read more like fantastical fiction than historical fiction, as it was told from Archie Christie's mistress Nan's point of view. This felt off to me, as I didn't like the character Nan and didn't care about her point of view. As a result, I quickly became bored as I wanted more of Agatha's story as I sympathized more with her than Nan.

**The Department of Rare Books and Special Collections** by Eva Jurczyk

A rare book goes missing after the director has a stroke. It's up to Lieso, the interim director to find out where it is and what happened. Definitely a book for book lovers.

**The Liz Taylor Ring** by Brenda Janowitz

Lizzie idolized Elizabeth Taylor and imagines her love story to Ritchie to be just as glamorous as Liz Taylor and Richard Burton. So she's ill prepared for the marriage filled with the ups and down of being married to a gambler. When Ritchie presents Lizzie with an 11 carat ring reminiscent of the fabled Liz Taylor ring, it becomes the symbol of their marriage. This book is set in the past and present: their love story, and years later when their three children find out that the ring they'd thought was lost is found. I loved the author's note at the end that shares all the Easter eggs dropped in the novel about the real Liz and Dick love story.

**The Love of My Life** by Rosie Walsh



Deeply disturbing and utterly satisfying novel. This story is about what happens when a husband, Leo, finds out the woman he thought he married, Emma, is keeping secrets from him. When secrets are exposed, nothing is as it seems.

**The Roughest Draft** by Emily Wibberley and Austin Siegemund-Broka

Co-writers Catrina and Nathan are no longer speaking after their last best-selling book. They are forced to work together after four years to write the next contracted book. This story has such raw emotion and an intense slow burn that escalates with every turn of the page. The book pulled me in, and I sighed when I reached the last page. I loved it.

**The Taste of Ginger** by Mansi Shah

Beautiful story of an Indian-American woman who returns to India during a family crisis. She rediscovers parts of herself she lost when assimilating into the American culture.

**You've Reached Sam** by Dustin Thao

This book is hauntingly beautiful. It explores the "what if"-- what if you could talk to the one you love after they died? There is so much emotion in this book. I will be thinking about this book for a long time--I loved it.

**Black Cake** by Charmaine Wilkerson

A gorgeous novel. A mother leaves behind an audio confession for her children after her death about her true life story. This book seamlessly weaves the mother's harrowing start in life with the tumultuous lives of her adult children. This is a thoughtful and introspective novel that I will be thinking about for a long time. It did make me long for some black cake--I loved it.

## Selections: May 2022



### Cliequot Book Club

#### May 2022 Selections

BOOK TITLE	Author	Reviewed by	Genre
A Family Affair	Robyn Carr	Sandra	Fiction
Brighter by the Day	Robin Roberts	Sandra	Nonfiction
Four Aunties and a Wedding	Jesse Q. Sutanto	Sandra	Mystery
Homicide and Halo-Halo	Mia P. Manasala	Sandra	Mystery
Sister Stardust	Jane Green	Sandra	Historical Fiction
The Club <sup>RBC</sup>	Ellery Lloyd	Sandra	Mystery
The Dangers of an Ordinary Night	Lynne Reeves	Sandra	Mystery
The Dictionary of Lost Words <sup>RBC</sup>	Pip Williams	Sandra	Historical Fiction
The Golden Couple	Greer Hendricks & Sarah Pekkanen	Sandra	Mystery
The Spanish Love Deception	Elena Armas	Sandra	Romance
The Wedding Crasher	Mia Sosa	Sandra	Romance
Wahala	Nikki May	Sandra	Fiction
What Happened to the Bennetts	Lisa Scottoline	Sandra	Mystery
Lessons in Chemistry <sup>GMA</sup>	Bonnie Garmus	Sandra	Fiction

**NOTES:**

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## Selections: June 2022



### Cliequot Book Club

#### June 2022 Selections

BOOK TITLE	Author	Reviewed by	Genre
Blood Sugar	Sascha Rothchild	Sandra	Mystery
By the Book	Jasmine Guillory	Sandra	Romance
Little Souls	Sandra Dallas	Sandra	Historical Fiction
Magic Season	Wade Rouse	Sandra	Nonfiction
Our Last Days in Barcelona	Chanel Cleeton	Sandra	Historical Fiction
Portrait of a Thief	Grace D. Li	Sandra	Mystery
Sunday at the Sunflower Inn	Jodi Thomas	Sandra	Fiction
The Unsinkable Greta James	Jennifer E. Smith	Sandra	Fiction
The Wedding Veil	Kristy Woodson Harvey	Sandra	Historical Fiction
The Younger Wife	Sally Hepworth	Sandra	Mystery
True Biz <sup>RBC</sup>	Sara Nović	Sandra	Fiction
The Change <sup>GMA</sup>	Kirsten Miller	Sandra	Mystery

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